

# False Teachers: Their Error and Goal

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 14 October 2013

Preacher: Tom Holland

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, fellas, welcome. We're glad you're here.

! Third lesson, not bad. Well, you might figure it out when you hear my topic tonight. The New Testament is filled with warnings about false prophets and false teachers. And the warnings in the New Testament begin very early. They begin with the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And he warned many times about false teachers and false prophets, the wolves in sheep's clothing. Matthew 7, 15, beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. Even in the Olivet Discourse, the Lord spoke and said, and many false prophets will arise and will mislead many. For false Christ, the false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect. I'm glad he put in there, if possible. Powerful verse. The authors of the

New Testament continued the warning passed down by Jesus. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, false apostles, false apostles, deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. That's 2 Corinthians 11, 3. Peter comes along, false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you who will secretly introduce destructive heresies. John wrote toward the end of the apostolic era in 1 John 4, 1, that many false prophets have gone out into the world. False teachers, false preachers, false prophets are dangerous because they deceive the unsuspecting. They are guided by Satan, who was a deceiver from the very start. Remember the Garden of Eden? How he deceived Eve? And as Paul said, they can even disguise himself as an angel of light. Pretty amazing statement there, an angel of light.

Anybody here got a Mormon background? I've always found it very interesting that Joseph Smith wrote that he was looking for the true religion. So he went out in the woods and he prayed that God would show him the true religion and he was enveloped in utter darkness. That bothers me since God is light. But he was enveloped in utter darkness and then there appeared to him an angel of light who gave him all the information that ended up in the books of Mormon and the other books that they have. And Paul's very language here is Satan is capable of disguising himself as an angel of light.

That passage goes on to point out that we should not be surprised when Satan's followers disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. And again, I'm not picking on the Mormons at all other than to say when they come to your door, they're like servants of righteousness. I mean, they look nice. They're dressed up. They got a little tie and white shirt on. They got a nice bicycle. They got an elder badge. We need elder badges.

[ 4 : 44 ] Mike Dursham needs an elder. Yeah, I know. I got one in the car. False teachers and false prophets are dangerous because they twist the true meaning of Scripture. And that makes them very dangerous. And let me just say to you guys, television is full of them.

They're everywhere. They're everywhere in television. Pretty much if you're going to camp out on Christian TV, stay on channel 378. At least that's what it is up where I live.

They preach financial success. They preach financial success so they can become rich. They're very successful. They achieve financial success. They get rich. They promise health and wealth. And in so doing, they roll in the dough.

They try to make their message seem biblical and spiritual, but it is far from the truth. False teachers confuse. That's their method of operation. They confuse.

Then they captivate. Once they have a confused audience. They captivate that audience. And finally, and ultimately, they then damn the unsuspecting to hell.

[ 6 : 08 ] When they go down that road of the false teachers and the false prophets. Now, the church at Ephesus had a great and rich history. Great history. But it was not spared the onslaught of false teachers.

And you know, there's a progression in the book of, in the Ephesian church. We read about it in Paul's book entitled Ephesus or Ephesians. And then Peter warns the Ephesians that false prophets are going to come and they're going to destroy you.

And then John writes of the seven churches. The first one is Ephesus. And they're there. And they destroyed it. And in Ephesus, there's only ruins. I've been up the road to Smyrna. There's still a church there. But Ephesus is just, it's sightseeing. You can go look at the ruins.

But they had a rich history. But there was an onslaught of false teachers. Paul wrote to Timothy to try and halt the influence of false teachers. That's really the goal.

Timothy, you've got to stop the false prophets. He needed to make things right in that church. And Paul begins by giving a charge to Timothy. In it, he talks about the error of false teachers. He then moves on to talk about their goals, their motive, and their effect.

[ 7 : 50 ] And anybody that thinks I came to that on my own, see me after class. We'll talk. The error of false teachers. 1 Timothy 1, 3 and 4.

As I urged you upon my departure for Macedonia, remain on at Ephesus so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines, nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies which give rise to mere speculation, rather than furthering the administration of God, which is by faith.

Pretty much sounds like a charge, doesn't it?

The mere fact that Paul says, I urge you to stay, may indicate that he had considered leaving. Now, Timothy was a giant of the faith. He was maturing still, but he was a giant.

But there are instances in the New Testament where it writes about him where he became timid.

Who can blame him? That happens to all of us.

[ 9 : 22 ] So Paul uses here in English a word urged, urged in English. And that basically means he is begging Timothy to remain with the Ephesian church.

And again, Timothy may have felt intimidated by false teachers that were trying to impact his church. He probably had a concern about his young age, and he was young.

And here he is teaching older brothers. And Timothy, like Paul, was always under the threat of persecution. Persecution was always prevalent.

Paul had been involved already in expelling false teachers, including Hymenaeus and Alexandria.

Now, they were probably the ringleaders.

And that's why they're prominently mentioned. I'm sure there were others that got expelled.

Timothy, then, is to carry on Paul's work by listening to Paul's challenge to ferret out false doctrine.

[ 10 : 39 ] And Paul says, by instructing certain men not to teach strange doctrines. Is it this week that Dr. MacArthur is doing strange fire?

Wednesday, I think. I believe that's starting this week. He's just following Paul, and Paul's his great hero. Instructing certain men not to teach strange doctrines.

Now, interestingly, the Greek word for instruct here is not referring to teaching. It is better rendered command. He's giving him a command.

Instructing certain men, I command them not to teach strange doctrine. It's a very strong word. Paul was passing on to Timothy, as he would later do to Titus, which we'll get to maybe, I don't know, March, not to play around with false teachers.

And, guys, that's good for us. You don't play around with these guys. They are deadly in the church. He said their mouths must be silenced.

[ 11 : 49 ] By the way, that's Timothy 1.11. Anytime there is false teaching in the church, men of God must rise up and command that teaching to cease, to stop it.

Timothy, as a son of the faith, had available to him the full weight of Paul's apostolic ministry to deal with false teachers. Paul had put his stamp of approval on Timothy.

And that's pretty powerful. That's a powerful thing to have. So by telling Timothy to instruct certain men, we can deduce that the false teachers Timothy had to deal with were few in number.

Certain men. But they were infecting a lot of men and women. But Timothy could probably name them. I mean, you know, he knew who they were. But the number of false teachers was not the problem.

It's never the number. It is their widespread influence. And they had widespread influence in Ephesus and beyond.

[13:02] Remember, there were a bunch of churches Paul and others had founded up there. Even more than the seven mentioned in Revelation. All of which were in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey.

Some have suggested that some of the false teachers may have, in fact, been elders in the Ephesian church. This may have been what Paul refers to in Acts 20, verse 30, when he said, From among your own selves men will arise speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them.

Pretty powerful. They had a problem in Ephesus. And the problem hadn't gone away. Not just in Ephesus, but in the whole world. It is a serious thing for elders to be involved in false teaching. In fact, when we come to chapter 5, we're going to learn that sinning elders are to be publicly disciplined. Publicly disciplined.

It was a serious thing for elders to be involved in Ephesus. It was a serious thing for elders to be involved in Ephesus. It consisted of myths and genealogies. These were doctrines of demons.

[14:54] That's pretty strong language. I'm glad Paul didn't equivocate. I mean, he's like John, you know, black and white. They consisted of myths and genealogies, doctrines of demons, passed on to the church.

And here's the danger. As God's truth. They were getting up there saying, this is from God. And it was just myth. It was myth.

Now, the specific myths and the specific genealogies, Paul doesn't explain. He just says there were myths and genealogies.

But we know that whatever they were, they were teachings contrary to the truth. Contrary to the truth.

And I hope it's not that, you know, we like to get on the computer and look up our genealogy. I don't think it is. I think it's something else. But it was contrary to the word of God.

[16:01] The effects of false teaching is this. There's an impact. It gave rise to mere speculation. These contributed nothing to the spreading of the faith.

In fact, it was counterproductive. It didn't have anything to do with God's saving plan. It was the antithesis of that. In fact, the heresy struck a blow at the gospel of saving faith being preached by Paul and the other disciples.

Most likely, it involved the heresy of teaching salvation by works righteousness. There's a lot of theologians that believe that's what was going on with the false teachers.

And let me just say this. If that's true, and I think it probably is, and they were teaching a salvation by a system of works righteousness, a combination of what we do, what we contribute, what Christ contributes, let me just say to you, that heresy is so widespread today, it is everywhere.

It is everywhere. And there are whole denominations that have bought into this. Yeah. And they're in Bartlesville. They're in Bartlesville.

[17:23] It is an absolute heresy to teach a righteousness achieved by human works, a salvation achieved by human works.

Nothing need be added to Christ. Nothing can be added to Christ. It is all of grace. It is all of Christ. And I would have to say this is the predominant view being broadcast today on television.

Television is filled with false teachers wanting people to send them money.

That's a work. And they will in turn receive a blessing from God. In other words, they'll achieve righteousness. You do this work and send me your hard-earned cash, you're going to be blessed. You will be righteous before God. Hear them all the time. I get so sick when I'm flipping channels and I go right by. I don't watch them. And I see Peter Popoff. He was proven a fraud 20 years ago.

[18:29] And he's back on. And he's making big money. Let's boil this down to the lowest common denominator. There are two religious systems on the earth.

There is the religion of divine accomplishment. That is what God in Christ accomplished to ensure our salvation apart from human effort, apart from human merit.

It is called, by the way, the gospel of Christ, the good news. The other category is the religion of human achievement.

And this is where men attempt to gain salvation by their own efforts through a combination of good deeds, ceremonies, or rituals.

And the false teachers at Ephesus were offering a way to God that required human achievement. And human religion has been with us for a long time.

[ 19 : 34 ] It was created in the Garden of Eden. It's called fig leaf religion. I got that from M.R. Dahan. Remember the great Dr. Dahan? Fig leaf religion.

Hey, you know what? We've messed up. But we can work our way back and please God if we can just cover our nakedness. We realize now we don't have any clothes on.

And let's go out and cover ourselves. And we'll be acceptable to God once more. Fig leaf religion. Why are false teachers such a serious threat to the church?

Because they bring eternal ruin to those who follow them. False teachers are never to be taken lightly.

Paul never took them lightly. He dealt with it. Listen to Galatians chapter 1. You're very familiar with this. 8 and 9. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed.

[ 20 : 54 ] As we have said before, so I say now again. He's going to repeat it. If any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed.

Anathema of God. I'm told that's eternally damned. To believe wrongly about the saving gospel of Christ is to be eternally lost.

Anyone that tampers with the gospel of Christ is deadly because they lure people away from eternal life and they lure the unwary people into eternal damnation.

It is a serious, serious thing. Now, the question is, and we're going to answer this tonight, by the way, does this happen today? Now, we've got some young guys in here.

We've got some young guys in here. Mike Dursom, Levi, Keelan, Jonathan. You're going to see some stuff here, boys. Just learn from it, okay? Does this happen today?

[ 21 : 58 ] Are there men out there who are false teachers, false Christs, that the Lord himself warned us about? Let's all watch this and then we'll judge. Preacher Jose Luis de Jesus Miranda is nothing if not a self-made man.

Not only his own religious sect in a Miami warehouse, he now spreads his word via his own satellite channel. Worship is following him like a rock star. But his lavish lifestyle and curious beliefs have more than a few people wondering if he's suffering, well, from a messiah complex.

CNN's John Zarello reports. Nine bodyguards surround 60-year-old Jose Luis de Jesus Miranda. Dressed in a finely tailored suit, he greets his followers as he walks a red carpet into a 500-seat auditorium packed with members of his congregation.

His presence brings tears of joy and an outpouring of song. De Jesus is founder and leader of Crescendo en Gracia, or Growing in Grace, a religious sect that claims millions of members around the world.

But there's no way to know for sure. You receive it, you accept it, you confess it, and it's done unto you. The sign on the pulpit looks like the American eagle, but reads, The government of God on earth.

[ 23 : 26 ] It is a sect with some very different beliefs. We don't believe in sin. We don't believe in the devil. We don't believe that there is such a place like hell. Which makes the Ten Commandments irrelevant.

Those rules are good for the society, but not for the kingdom of God. The truth is not found in the Gospels, says De Jesus, but in the letters of Paul. De Jesus once said he was a reincarnation of Paul.

Then two years ago, he proclaimed himself Christ. Oh, I won't die. No, I won't die. You're not dying. No, I won't die. Even if you try to kill me. And his followers believed him.

The man Christ Jesus is here among us. Dr. José Luis de Jesus Miranda is the man Christ Jesus. The Puerto Rican born to Jesus admits to drug use and spending time in jail as a youth.

Now he claims God has merged with him. He said, I will appear for the second time without relationship to sin. And that's what I'm doing.

[ 24 : 27 ] I do greater things than Jesus of Nazareth. Much greater. Greater than Jesus of Nazareth? Much greater. Does that make you greater than Jesus of Nazareth? I am greater than him.

You are? Yes, because I teach better than him. He spoke in parables. I teach wisdom and revelation. He does not perform miracles, he says, because the second coming is based on teaching and building the church.

And his followers are not shy about their belief. They've confronted Catholics outside of church and held rallies in Miami. Tearing up religious writings of other faiths.

In El Salvador, they demonstrated outside a cathedral and smashed statues of Jesus. Sometimes it gets out of hand because of the other people. They began shouting. You're blaming them.

Yeah, well, they get the wild, not us. DeJesus' followers are also generous, handing over envelopes of cash that go into his wife's purse.

[ 25 : 25 ] There's many people that accuse us of giving everything to the apostle, 90%, 100%. That's not necessarily true. His daughter, the church treasurer, says they brought in \$1.4 million in donations last year here in the United States.

Most of it, they say, goes to expenses in running cable television networks here and in Latin America. The electricity, they send me a bill. Telephone, they send a bill. I go to take a plane, they charge me.

We need money, John. The system down here is money. His salary is reported as \$136,000 a year. He lives richer than that.

A lavish home. Expensive cars. You've got beautiful, what is that, a Rolex you're wearing? Yes. Beautiful Rolex and the diamond-encrusted ring there and the gold chain.

I don't only have one. I have three Rolexes. Given by my beautiful people who love me so much, this is all free, you know, gifts that they give me. I can reject that.

[ 26 : 30 ] The DeJesus sect has all the earmarks of a cult, says expert Steve Hasset. Destructive religious cults are about fear, about control, about deception and manipulation, and about making the leader wealthy and not about serving the downtrodden and the poor.

DeJesus' followers insist they are nothing like that. You may pick your friends, you pick your businesses, that kind of stuff. And here, it's like the whole world is ours. I mean, we don't even have documentation of who our members are.

So how is it that we're a cult? I mean, it doesn't fit. It's been 20 years since DeJesus founded Growing in Grace in a warehouse outside Miami. His ambitions are still growing.

I'm going to change the whole world. And that, he says, is why he's here. And start leaving! John Zarela, CNN, Miami.

Where's the tellers? This Sunday, take the plates over to Sherry and have her dump them in the purse.

[ 27 : 47 ] We'll see how that works. Jonathan's all for it. Give me a thumbs up back there. Just bypass Sherry, give him to Jonathan.

Guys, I'm going to tell you something. This is one. And probably very notable in the sense that he's got money. I mean, I'd never heard of him until I Googled. So he's an actual character?

Oh, yeah. This isn't Hollywood. No, no. He's a fellow Puerto Rican of mine. My parents live there 11 years. There's thousands. I've told you before, when I was in the FBI and Jim Jones, you know, all those folks down in Ghana, they committed suicide.

I was supposed to go down there, and it just didn't work. But we estimated there were 1,600 guys like Jim Jones in America at that moment that had a following.

Oh, huge money. The Bhagwan Sri Rajesh in Oregon, he had 90 Royals Royces and about a 100,000-acre ranch.

[ 28 : 57 ] It's big business. There are false Christs everywhere. And Jesus said there would be, and he said there would be even more at the end of the age. They would really multiply.

And that's what we're saying. I told the class yesterday boldly, and I'll tell you guys today. Don't know the day of Christ's return. Don't know the time. But he said we can know the season. And I'm telling you, we're in the season.

And if I'm wrong, I'll apologize to you all later. But I believe with all my heart we are in the season. What about the goal of false teachers? 1 Timothy 1, 5, and 6.

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and sincere faith. For some men straying from these things have turned aside to fruitless discussion.

Their goal is to be fruitless. You've got an example of that up here. Fruitless discussion. Paul begins, though, with the greatest characteristics of true believers.

[ 30 : 04 ] He says they have love. Remember 1 Corinthians letter? 13, great letter on love.

They have love. They have love for God and love for their neighbor. That's the characteristic of a true believer. Love, in fact, is the mark that marks us out as true followers of Christ.

God has always put a mark on his people. I won't get into all of it now. But I mean the mark of circumcision, the mark of obeying the Sabbath. God always marked out his people. We have a mark. And by this mark, and that is demonstratable love, all men will know that you are my disciples.

How are we going to know? He follows up. If you have love one for another. And I didn't even record it here, but it's so important that in the high priestly prayer, he says it's so important, he said, because men will come along, and if they don't see demonstratable love, they will say we don't believe you belong to the Messiah, and we don't think the Messiah, Jesus Christ, came from God. [ 31 : 24 ] Because you said your followers would love one another, and we see them fussing and fighting over the color of carpet. My dad, who was not a Baptist, used to say that's how God grows Baptist churches.

Just go out and buy some gaudy, gaudy carpet. We've had that here years ago. When he wrote his epistles, John added this.

1 John 4. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and everyone who loves is born of God, for God is love.

And we know as students of the world that John is referring here to the highest form of love, agape, that is a love that embraces self-denial, self-sacrifice, in order to benefit others.

And we have the greatest demonstration of that level of love when the Son of God willingly went to the cross. That's the level of love we're talking about.

[ 32 : 33 ] Lay down my life for others. That was agape at Calvary. That level of love flows from three sources that Paul here identifies.

And he's talking, remember, about a pure heart. How can you have a pure heart? And the first concept is that love flows from a pure heart. The Old Testament knew the subject of a pure heart very well.

Psalms 24. 24. Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord and who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart.

And if you're a follower of Christ in here tonight, you have clean hands and a pure heart. And you may be sitting there saying, I don't feel very clean, I don't feel very pure. but you have the imputed hands and heart of Christ.

And His hands were clean and pure. After his horrific sin with Bathsheba, David eventually cried out to God, Create in me a clean heart, O God.

[ 33 : 43 ] A pure heart. Psalm 51.10. And we later read in Psalm 73.1, Surely God is good to Israel to those who are pure in heart.

So how does one achieve a pure heart in this lifetime? Wesley thought it was to achieve sinless perfection. It proved to be an impossibility which Reverend Wesley apparently admitted later in life even on his deathbed that he hadn't achieved it.

A pure heart is a heart washed clean by regeneration and it is an obedient heart. And you can't separate those two. It's been washed clean and which leads to obedience.

So a pure heart is an ingredient of agape. The other thing is a good conscience that is also an ingredient having a good conscience.

good here in the Greek language is that which produces satisfaction and a sense of well-being. The conscience is an amazing thing.

[ 34 : 57 ] Everyone's got one. Some can repress it but everyone's got one. The conscience was created by God to put us to put within us a self-judging faculty.

It's conscience. You know, even Romans 1 says that the unsaved can look up and see creation and they have a conscience.

They have a God-shaped void in there. There's someone more powerful than me. Conscience either affirms us or accuses us. They can do either one.

Paul addressed this very subject in the second chapter of Romans verse 14 and 15. For when Gentiles who do not have the law do instinctively the things of the law these not having the law or a law to themselves in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts.

Well, they didn't have the law where did that come from he says their conscience bearing witness. It was their conscience at work and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them.

[ 36 : 21 ] Defending them. We all have a conscience. Some repress it and do a pretty good job of it. But I'm going to tell you it will manifest itself sooner or later.

In spite of man's efforts to repress it the human mind knows the standard of right and wrong. God put it in all of us saved and unsaved.

And when that standard is violated the conscience reacts to accuse producing guilt shame doubt fear remorse or despair or combination of all those.

John MacArthur just finished up a study on abortion. I'm telling you the interviews they have done with women who've gone through an abortion their conscience was not cleansed by the doctor. Nurses that have to work in those facilities even doctors that have left that lifestyle conscience at work. and all those things are produced if we maintain a pure heart we will not come under conviction of our conscience your conscience won't convict you if you're doing what is right what God has commanded a pure heart produces peace confident joy hope courage and when you have those they produce contentment we're content John MacArthur said in all his years he's never had someone walk up and say you know I'm really content well this was a good weekend I'm just so content I am really content this week from all of this love agape will flow agape will flow and the third ingredient to achieving a pure heart is to have a sincere faith you gotta have that false teachers never produce sincere faith that's the danger they produce the opposite they produce the opposite they have a dirty heart that has not been cleansed by the gospel and they have a conscience or consciences if there's multiple ones that are guilty before God and before themselves they have false hypocritical faith that type of life will never produce a love a sacrificial love for God or man can't do it it's impossible because this is their lifestyle

[ 39 : 14 ] Paul said they have strayed from these things having a turned aside to fruitless discussion they turned aside and entered into a period of fruitless discussions turned aside means to they've gone off course when I played golf I was off course a whole lot they went off course they hooked or they sliced but they went off course John MacArthur says that the goal we're going to finish with this a little early but John MacArthur says this the goal of false teachers including those today especially was not to create an environment of love but to fulfill egos and to fill their pockets with ill gotten money that's their goal I'm glad John doesn't mince words that is the mark of many television evangelists not all of them but a lot of them such teaching is nothing but fruitless discussion fruitless discussion is all it is and such teachers can never produce love why because love is a fruit of the spirit

Thank you.